

## SACP VANGUARD ROLE

# Advancing, deepening and defending the NDR

The June CC Discussion Document to be debated at the 14th SACP National Congress from 10 to 15 July reviews the SACP's role in the NDR and suggests that given the current political terrain and the challenges within the Alliance that the SACP has to play far more active role in advancing the NDR

**A**fter a prolonged revolutionary struggle, the 1994 democratic breakthrough in South Africa finally abolished the institutions of white minority rule with their origins in centuries of colonial domination. This radical rupture laid the basis for a democratic dispensation within a progressive, non-racial constitutional order.

Since 1994, the SACP has been actively campaigning for a new push, a second radical phase of the struggle to advance and deepen the national democratic revolution (NDR), on the basis of the bridgehead of the 1994 democratic breakthrough.

We have consistently argued that without urgently opening up this new front of struggle, without an uninterrupted second radical advance, the gains of the first phase would be threatened; the liberation credentials of the ANC-led movement could be increasingly eroded as memory of the anti-apartheid struggle receded; popular power might be dissipated into passive expectation of state delivery, or individualistic consumerism, or, at best, fragmented into thousands of localised and sectoral protest actions. Any undue pause, we have further argued,

would allow South African monopoly capital, historically sheltered behind colonial and white minority rule, to regroup. All of these likely tendencies, we said, would leave the structural legacy of apartheid colonialism and the socio-economic crises affecting the majority of South Africans largely intact.

In 2017 it is obvious that these concerns have been substantially correct.

More concerning still, faced with these challenges, the ANC, the leading formation in our liberation struggle over the past decades, a political movement that has enjoyed overwhelming electoral support since 1994, is itself now in serious and possibly irreversible decline.

This was the context in which the SACP contributed to and welcomed the ANC's 2012 National Conference resolution for "a second radical phase of the NDR". Unfortunately, having taken this important resolution, there was little appetite or interest at first from within much of the ANC itself to provide any substantial content to, let alone active organisation and mobilisation for a second radical phase.

Over the past year, however, there has been a sudden but largely opportunistic resurrection of the idea of "radical economic transformation". Unfortunately, this belated evocation of radical transformation has typically been associated with the most reactionary, private rent-seeking elements within our movement. They have appropriated this slogan demagogically as a distraction from the increasing exposure of their own parasitic looting of public resources. This looting is carried forward by way of well-organised networks of patronage, coordinated through a strong strategic presidential centre that straddles both the constitutional state and a parallel shadow state.

From a wide range of progressive comrades within the ANC and Alliance, from stalwarts and veterans of our movement and armed struggle, even from those democratic forces historically opposed to, or sus-

picious of the SACP, there has been a growing recognition of the role the SACP has played, working closely with all democratic forces, inside the movement, inside the state and in broader society, in exposing and in fighting both state capture and liberation movement capture. More than ever, the SACP has a critical vanguard role to play in providing real content to the imperative of a second radical phase of the NDR – not just in theory, but above all in mass-based practice.

What are the critical organisational tasks in this context? How should the ANC-Alliance be reconfigured to respond to these challenges? Is reconfiguration even possible or desirable? In taking forward this role, if the SACP is to be credible and serious about dealing decisively with the cancer consuming our movement, we need also to examine self-critically what lessons we can learn from the recent past. What role might we have played unintentionally in creating the crisis?

Is the strategic concept of an NDR itself inherently flawed? Are national liberation movements inherently “bourgeois-democratic” in nature? Worse still, once in power after two decades or so, are national liberation movements bound to degenerate? Is the current fragmentation of our own liberation movement inevitable (and therefore irreversible)? These have long been the arguments of an anti-ANC left, as well as of liberal forces who regard the “national question” as irrelevant.

To help to answer these questions, one important step is to re-visit the historical roots of our strategic perspective of a radical NDR.

## **THE TWO TENDENCIES WITHIN NATIONAL LIBERATION STRUGGLES – THE ORIGINS OF THE STRATEGY OF A RADICAL NDR**

### **The Comintern and the National Question**

The SACP is not a newcomer to the idea of a radical national democratic revolution. In fact, the strategic concept of an NDR was developed

within the international communist movement nearly a century ago.

Soon after the 1917 Bolshevik October Revolution in Russia, the question of the relationship between anti-colonial nationalist struggles and emerging Communist Parties in largely peasant-dominated societies arose. At the Second Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1920, there was a “Commission on the National and the Colonial Question”, in which Lenin and the Indian communist, MN Roy, played leading roles. In his report back to the Congress on the commission’s work, Lenin wrote:

*“We have discussed whether it would be right or wrong, in principle and in theory, to state that the Communist International and the Communist parties must support the bourgeois-democratic movement in backward countries. As a result of our discussion, we have arrived at the unanimous decision to speak of the national-revolutionary movement rather than of the ‘bourgeois-democratic’ movement.”*

We can see here the origins of the communist strategy of supporting NDR struggles in colonial and semi-colonial conditions. As Lenin goes on to explain, the idea of a “national-revolutionary movement” was advanced to distinguish between two diverging tendencies within national liberation struggles – the one national-revolutionary, the other a “bourgeois-democratic” reformist tendency: *“if we speak of the bourgeois-democratic movement, we shall be obliterating all distinctions between the reformist and the revolutionary movements. Yet that distinction has been very clearly revealed of late in the backward and colonial countries...”*

The Comintern urged Communist Parties in countries like India and China to work closely with, and to help radicalise, the “national revolutionary” tendency in the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist national struggles.

### **Monopoly capital and industrialisation in South Africa**

When the SACP (the CPSA as it was then known) was launched in 1921, the socio-economic context was different to that prevailing in societies like India and China, which had overwhelmingly peasant majority populations and strong feudal features.

At that point, for nearly half-a-century, much of the southern African region had already been plunged into a massive process of monopoly capitalist-driven transformation. Rapid industrialisation, centred on the diamond fields around Kimberley and then the gold fields of the Witwatersrand, drew huge flows of monopoly capital from the imperialist centres. There were major investments in mines, and also in rail and port infrastructure connecting the mining hinterland to the colonial ports. The Anglo-Boer war, the largest armed conflict of its time, forcibly consolidated disparate states, establishing a single geographical political entity, the Union of South Africa, under British imperial hegemony. In 1910, the Union of South Africa became a semi-independent British dominion under local white minority rule.

Above all, this massive capitalist-driven industrial revolution transformed the hard-pressed African peasantry and traditional African societies within the borders of the new Union of South Africa, and, indeed, increasingly throughout the southern African region, into impoverished labour reserves. Earlier colonial wars of dispossession had laid the basis. Now an active and violent process of proletarianisation was launched – that is to say, the forced expropriation of independent means of production, forcing hundreds of thousands and eventually millions of rural migrants on to the capitalist labour market on extremely unfavourable terms.

Money taxes were imposed upon these labour reserves to intensify the coercion of African workers into waged employment. At the same time, perverted forms of “traditional” patriarchal rule were consolidat-

ed as apparatuses of indirect colonial rule. Residual communal land tenure and subsistence farming were also conserved at the margins. This further lowered the wage costs for mining monopoly capital of hiring migrant black labour. The costs of reproduction of the male migrant labour force (caring for the young, the injured and sick, and the elderly) were increasingly carried by rural African women – the basis for the persisting triple (national, class and patriarchal) oppression legacy of African women in our country.

### **The early Communist Party in South Africa**

Inspired by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, socialists in South Africa formed the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) in 1921 as an affiliate of the Communist International. The CPSA sought to build working class solidarity between white and black workers in a struggle against mining monopoly capital. Already by 1924 the majority of the CPSA's non-racial membership was African. However, at first the CPSA did not recognise the interconnection between the class struggle for socialism and the national question in South Africa.

It was the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1928 that mandated the CPSA to pursue a national democratic struggle as a “stage” towards a “workers’ and peasant republic”. This mandate called for the recognition that mobilisation around the grievances and aspirations of the nationally oppressed majority of South Africans was the critical motive force in the struggle for socialism against a double colonial reality – the continued hegemony of British imperialist capital and emergent national monopoly capital buttressed by an “internal colonialism” (white minority rule).

While acknowledging that the 1910 Union of South Africa had accorded a degree of political independence to South Africa under white minority rule, the Comintern correctly argued that South Africa re-

mained an essentially colonial reality. This is how the Executive Committee of the CI in its Resolution on South Africa put it:

*“South Africa is a British Dominion of the colonial type. The development of relations of capitalist production has led to British imperialism carrying out the economic exploitation of the country with the participation of the white bourgeoisie of South Africa (British and Boer). Of course, this does not alter the general colonial character of the economy of South Africa, since British capital continues to occupy the principal economic positions in the country (banks, mining and industry), and since the South African bourgeoisie is equally interested in the merciless exploitation of the negro population.”*

The same Comintern resolution instructed South African communists to pay particular attention to the still small emergent black, nationalist formations, with the ANC specifically mentioned. This new strategic line was adopted by the CPSA in 1929. Today, the SACP is criticised in some ANC quarters for paying “too much attention” to the ANC, but we have been paying considerable attention to the ANC for many decades, and we do not apologise for it.

## THE TWO TENDENCIES

Through much of the first half of the 20th century the ANC held a broadly progressive, but essentially liberal-reformist perspective on the nature of the national struggle. In the late-1940s and through the 1950s, with rising mass and working class struggles, the ANC increasingly moved towards a more radical approach. The Freedom Charter, adopted in 1955 by the Congress of the People, marked a decisive step in the radicalisation of the movement’s strategic vision.

However, it is important to remember that within the ANC there have always been tensions between both more narrowly nationalist and more bourgeois reformist tendencies on the one hand, and more

progressive left-leaning tendencies on the other. For these reasons, the ANC was, for instance, not at first able to formally adopt the Freedom Charter. Its eventual adoption by the ANC in 1956 provoked a subsequent split in the shape of the PAC – which rejected both the non-racial (the inclusive African nationalist) vision of the Charter, as well as its commitment to the common ownership of the mineral resources of our country, arguing that this was a “foreign Communist” idea.

The 1962 SACP programme, *The Road to South African Freedom*, reaffirmed the revolutionary national-democratic nature of the South African struggle. In characterising apartheid South Africa, the SACP’s 1962 programme introduced the important concept of “colonialism of a special type”, (CST), referring to the fact that, while South Africa continued to be a semi-peripheral economy subordinated to the interests of imperialist capital, the dominant colonial power (exercised through white minority rule) occupied the same spatial reality as the nationally oppressed black majority.

The crucial ANC 1969 Morogoro Conference, which marked a critical turning point after the major strategic defeat suffered by our movement in the mid-1960s, in effect, reaffirmed Lenin’s distinction between national struggles that were bourgeois-democratic, and those that were national-revolutionary. The *Morogoro Strategy and Tactics* document clearly associated the ANC with the national-revolutionary line of march: “our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.”

The Morogoro Conference argued that the viability of a radical NDR in South Africa was made possible by two factors:

- A global conjuncture – “*The struggle of the oppressed people of*



*South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the Socialist system...”; and*

- The fact that in South Africa, compared to most other societies embarked on national liberation struggles, the working class here was the overwhelming majority – “The perspective of a **speedy progression** from formal liberation to genuine and lasting emancipation is made more real by the existence in our country of a large and growing working class whose class consciousness complements national consciousness.”

This strategic vision of “a speedy progression” from formal liberation to a radical NDR in many ways inspired the great rolling waves of semi-insurrectionary struggles from the mid-1970s, through the 1980s and into the early 1990s. It was a strategic vision that helped the ANC once more reclaim its hegemonic leadership role within the broader South African struggle.

These semi-insurrectionary mass struggles were the decisive factor in forcing the hand of the apartheid regime into finally engaging with the liberation movement in negotiations. However, the radical NDR vision was to be challenged from within the ANC itself at the very moment that the 1994 democratic breakthrough became imminent.

The collapse of the Soviet bloc played a major role in this revisionist turn. It was no longer easy to proclaim, as the ANC had done in 1969, that our struggle was taking place in a global context marked by an inexorable forward march “within an international context of transition to the Socialist system”.

But if the global context had become less favourable for a radical NDR, this, surely, did not negate the imperative of still pursuing that path. Nor did the global situation change the objective class realities in South Africa – in which the employed and unemployed proletariat con-

stituted the overwhelming majority, and in which the massive domination of monopoly capital would make formal liberation relatively meaningless without a radical advance.

Indeed, notwithstanding its general optimism, the Morogoro *Strategy and Tactics* document introduced an important note of caution:

“We do not underestimate the complexities which will face a people’s government during the transformation period nor the enormity of the problems of meeting the economic needs of the mass of the oppressed people. But one thing is certain – in our land this cannot be effectively tackled unless the basic wealth and the basic resources are at the disposal of the **people as a whole and** are not **manipulated by sections of individuals be they White or Black**”.

(In our current reality it is important to note the “or Black”).

In short, Morogoro, while recognising likely difficulties, did not see these as reasons to abandon the strategy of a radical NDR.

### The 1994 democratic breakthrough...what next?

But abandonment is exactly what started to happen within prominent circles within the ANC in the early 1990s.

It is interesting to contrast, as an example, the key messages that the SACP and the ANC respectively sought to advance in the immediate aftermath of the landslide ANC-led Alliance electoral victory in April 1994. The message from the SACP’s Central Committee was clearly spelt out on the cover of the May 1994 issue of *The African Communist*: “A luta continua!” – “the Struggle Continues!”, accompanied by an editorial elaborating on this perspective along with photographs of the winding thousands-strong queues outside voting stations to make the point that the democratic breakthrough was itself mass-driven.

This was in contrast to the front cover of the ANC’s official publication at the time *Mayibuye*, which carried the relatively demobilising

headline “Free at Last!”, and a cover photograph of the Union Buildings and an air-force jet formation flying overhead at the inauguration of President Mandela. The accompanying Mayibuye editorial begins: *“The moment has arrived. Liberation. Real change. National Democratic Revolution. Call it what you may.”* It then goes on to envisage a modest, largely state-driven, top-down process: *“Now is the time to make good the election pledge... In June, allocations from the budget will be decided upon. A modest beginning can then be made...”*

From the very outset of the post-apartheid period then, there was a determined ideological and strategic thrust to reassert a revisionist, liberal-reformist vision of the NDR.

## THE FIRST POST-APARTHEID DECADE-AND-A-HALF

The first phase, we argued, was constituted by the radical breakthrough in the 1994-1996 period. This radical breakthrough saw the abolition of the institutions of white minority rule, the achievement of one-person one-vote representative democracy, and a progressive constitution drawn up through an elected constituent assembly.

Our position in the mid-1990s (a position we continue to believe was correct) was that a second radical phase of the NDR should have begun **immediately**, using the bridge-head of the 1994-1996 breakthrough.

In arguing for a radical approach in the mid-1990s, the SACP was well aware that an adventurist “great leap forward” was not possible. The rolling back and relative stagnation of liberation movement advances within our own region; the 1989-1991 collapse of the former Soviet bloc; and the ensuing unchallenged US-led imperialist global domination had created an unfavourable correlation of forces internationally.

However, the landslide 1994 ANC electoral victory; the unextin-

guished popular and working class struggle traditions at the time that had made the negotiated transition possible in the first place; and the fact that South African monopoly capital, given its deep complicity with white minority rule, was off-balance, created relatively favourable domestic conditions for radical advances.

These would necessarily include, as the SACP argued in 1995, a socialist orientation within an ongoing NDR – building capacity for, momentum towards, and elements of socialism in the present. This perspective was encapsulated in our slogan: Socialism is the future – build it now! In other words, we understood the ongoing NDR and struggle for socialism in the new conditions to be essentially a struggle for “revolutionary-reforms”, of progressive transformational measures. This strategic position also meant that we understood that socialism was not a “second stage” to be pursued (that is to say, delayed) only “once the NDR was completed”. Neither the NDR nor socialism were “events”. This was a strategic perspective of a relatively protracted struggle, a “war of position”, on the terrain of a constitutional, majority-rule democracy to contest and achieve radical transformation in all key sites of power. This required “going to the root” of the deep structural legacy of colonialism of a special type.

Unfortunately, during the Mandela-Mbeki administrations an alternative strategic orientation was adopted, which the SACP characterised as the “1996 class project”. Despite contestation from within the ANC-led Alliance, it became the dominant strategic line in the ANC and in government.

This strategic line, influenced strongly by a range of Western think-tanks, borrowed liberally from the perspectives of the first Bill Clinton administration (1993-1997), later adopted by Tony Blair and most of Western Europe. This was essentially a drastically watered-down social democratic stance, calling itself the “Third Way”, and embracing

neo-liberalism, financialised globalisation, a technocratic state, with “modernised” centre-left (often alternating electorally with more or less identical centre-right) political parties led by “electable” centrist politicians enjoying strong support from key sectors of capital. This is what some have described as “the extreme centre”. Barack Obama was possibly the last major representative of this current.

The ongoing global economic crisis that began in 2007 in the US as a financial crisis has shaken the assumptions of this project to the core. The economic crisis has now also become a crisis of political representation. Centrist, “Third Way” politics is now off-balance in many advanced capitalist societies, with the popular rejection of “establishment” politics in the US (the election of Trump), in the UK (Brexit), and across much of the EU.

The two decades of “Third Way” political hegemony has witnessed growing inequality both on a global scale and within dominant capitalist societies. Even within developed capitalist economies, trade union and welfare advances have been eroded, large sections of the working class, middle strata and professionals now find themselves unemployed or in precarious work.

Ruling Third Way political parties (along with their centre-right colleagues) in the imperialist centres have typically supported NATO, and have been actively complicit in the military destabilisation of vast stretches of the Middle East and North Africa. War has been waging in Afghanistan since the 1980s, and in Somalia since the 1990s. Along with climate-induced crises, and structural adjustment programmes resulting in economic collapse, imperialist military interventions have now produced the largest flow of internal displacements and of cross-border refugees since the end of the Second World War. Contrary to the focus of most mainstream media, by far the largest numbers of refugees and desperate economic migrants are located within third world

societies, including South Africa. However, there have also been major flows of migrants and refugees into Europe and the US.

De-industrialisation, growing employment precariousness, deepening inequality and the flow of migrants has been the terrain on which populist, rhetorically anti-establishment, right and extreme-right wing political parties and personalities have surged electorally within the US and many European countries on the basis of xenophobic, anti-immigrant demagoguery.

But there have also been important left-leaning regroupings either from inside established centre-left parties, or through the formation of new movements, with the latter sometimes working with existing communist and radical left parties. Many of these movements take their direct inspiration from the diverse, anti-neoliberal, centre-left and radical left movements that swept through most of Latin America in the 2000s.

South Africa obviously has its own specific features, but it is possible to recognize many similar crises of representation dynamics at play that began to come to a head in the 2007-2009 period in our own country: the loss of credibility of the neo-liberal Third Way (the “1996 class project”); the emergence of a narrow populist nationalist right tendency; and the imperative of a regrouping of the left. However, in South Africa, these dynamics began to play themselves out largely within the ANC and ANC-led Alliance.

## **HOW DID WE GET HERE? THE POLOKWANE MOMENT**

After 1994 there were consistent efforts from within the ANC and ANC-led movement to counter the neo-liberal Third Way project – the “1996 class project”. These efforts came to a head in the “Polokwane” conjuncture of 2007-2008. One of the organising perspectives of the upheaval that occurred at this point was the assertion that the “ANC (or

the Alliance, in another version) is the strategic political centre” – and, not, therefore, the state-presidency where Mbeki’s technicist approach had sought to locate it. At face value, and for many, this assertion of the strategic primacy of the ANC-led movement represented an attempt to reassert the democratic and mass-based, movement character of the ANC and its Alliance.

However, in practice the Polokwane moment involved a marriage of convenience (or, perhaps, an unholy alliance) of the broad left, anti-neoliberal bloc with demagogic forces for whom the assertion of the ANC as the strategic political centre was a move to displace incumbents in the state with their own, in order to advance an even more aggressive parasitic, rent-seeking agenda. These latter forces identified patronage-based mobilisation within the ANC as the soft underbelly from which to capture strategic positions within the state to advance their parasitic agenda.

In other words, there were two very distinct understandings of what was meant by the “ANC as the strategic political centre”.

### **The first Zuma administration (2009-14)**

In the first Zuma administration (2009-14) there was a relative balance of forces between the divergent agendas that had come together in a marriage of convenience at Polokwane. In some sectors (health with a major shift on Aids, trade and industrial policy, state-led infrastructure spend, recalibrating competition policy as a means to leverage economic transformation, a greater emphasis on vocational training, etc) space was opened up for progressive advances, including developing a better working relationship between the state and social movements (the social movement campaign for anti-retroviral treatment being the most obvious case).

However, in terms of sustaining and re-building the ANC-led move-

ment's capacity to mobilise the key motive forces, these and other positives in state deployment, coincided with the weakening of Cosatu, partly as a result of the global economic downturn and resultant retrenchments. There was also a loss of momentum on the SACP side in terms of active working class and popular mobilisation (a failure to sustain a very successful financial sector campaign for instance). Deployment advances in some sectors noted above were, however, always (and surely deliberately) held in check by other deployments in the 2009-2014 administration.

These checks and balances involved transactional deployment trade-offs between three tendencies (putting it very schematically) – a more left-leaning tendency; a more narrow BEE tendency; and a more centrist grouping, including many from the Mbeki project who had remained in ANC/state leadership positions (the National Development Plan was essentially the product of this last-mentioned tendency). This last-mentioned tendency was cultivated as the outward-looking hegemonic project seeking to appeal to business and foreign investors, while the more left-leaning and narrow BEE tendencies competed for support within the movement and among popular strata. There was also considerable, largely tactical, instability within the two last-mentioned groupings, resulting in the Numsa split from the Alliance on the one hand; and the belated expulsion of Youth League president Julius Malema from the narrow nationalist parasitic tendency on the other.

Important advances were made in the 2009 administration, but the constraints noted above meant that the structural problems within the political economy were not radically and systemically addressed. Where there was significant massification of programmes – the 17-million social grants reaching some 10-million beneficiaries, for instance, or the largest roll-out of ARVs in the world – critical gains were achieved. The floor of poverty was lifted and there have been significant and rapid



gains in life expectancy. While these were absolutely essential interventions they were not inherently transformative.

In other cases, where there were significant budgetary allocations – in the major state-led infrastructure build programme, for instance – much of it (in the outgoing Mbeki administration) had been spent on non-transformative vanity projects (2010 FIFA World Cup stadia and other related infrastructure: the Gauteng Freeway Infrastructure Programme, the King Shaka International Airport and Dube Tradeport, the Gautrain). In the first Zuma administration, with the establishment of a Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission there was progress in re-orienting state-led infrastructure spending into a more coordinated and integrated approach. However, weaknesses and parasitic activities in key state-owned companies (notably, but not only, Eskom and Transnet), and in different spheres of government constrained the potential impact. The massive over-spending at Zuma's Nkandla homestead symbolised both the continuation and the personalisation of the vanity project phenomenon.

As for social infrastructure, the mass low-cost RDP and other subsidised housing programmes (some 4-million houses) have largely entrenched apartheid spatial patterns by building working class housing in peripheral locations far from work and other resources. This has served simply to reproduce working class marginalisation and black poverty – as well as a deeply skewed property market. The Gauteng signature housing project, the mixed-income Cosmo City development, was targeted at both subsidised housing for the working class and poor and mortgaged houses for the emergent black professional and other middle strata. However, only a small percentage of the original beneficiaries/owners are still staying in their houses as a result of the enormous cost of transport because of its location. The subsidised houses are being sold, as the original beneficiaries move out, at far below the

cost to the state of their construction. There is also wide-scale bank repossessions of mortgaged homes in Cosmo City, with auctioning-off sales on average fetching 30% less than nominal market value.

Other potentially critical pillars of a radical second phase of the NDR – like the state-led industrial action programme – have simply not received the scale of funding that would enable a qualitative step-change. In some cases, the worst ravages of neoliberal-driven de-industrialisation and job losses have been halted, and some level of employment stabilisation has remarkably been achieved in a sector like clothing and textiles – indicating what could be achieved more widely if there was sufficient political will and resourcing.

Public employment programmes – the Expanded Public Works Programme and the Community Work Programme – while achieving relative massification (at around a million work opportunities a year), are, given the extraordinary levels of unemployment, nowhere near the scale required and envisaged in Chapter 3 of the National Development Plan. The effective resourcing of these programmes should aim strategically to move us towards the objective of the universal right to work (as envisaged in the Freedom Charter) as well as a socialist de-commodification of the very notion of work.

As for land reform and restitution, again the required financial and human resources allocated have been woefully inadequate, and, even worse, there has been a strategic muddle. At best land reform is little more than a handful of dispersed projects, many of which collapse within a matter of years as a result of the failure to follow up making land available with concerted state technical, market and financial support. There has also been a failure to appreciate that, while access to rural land is key, the most significant land crisis is now urban.

In short, none of the potentially radical, “game-changing” sectoral measures have been sufficiently resourced or championed politically,

or effectively conceptualised strategically, to ensure the kind of mass-scale, transformative impact required. This is not to say that, for instance, a transformative infrastructure build programme, state-led re-industrialisation, public employment programmes, and land reform (all of which can and should be connected) could all have necessarily been scaled-up simultaneously and equally. The trouble is that none have been.

Constraining serious radical transformation has been the deliberate “balancing of forces” within Cabinet and key departmental and SOC deployments. Throughout the first Zuma administration, Treasury remained firmly in the grip of a neo-liberal orientation. The SACP’s partial policy victory at the ANC’s 2009 Polokwane conference for the establishment of a state planning organ was watered down into the National Planning Commission, basically outside of state structures. And, consistently, throughout the 2009-14 administration, the president kept a very close control over the key departments in the criminal-justice sector.

These factors, coupled with the impact of the global economic crisis, meant that popular discontent and a proliferation of township and other protests increased. It was in this context that the ANC at its 2011 Mangaung national conference resolved on the necessity of a “Second Radical Phase of the NDR”. As already noted, no attempt was made from the side of the ANC to give meaning and content to the idea of a “second radical phase” – an inability reflecting the ideological paralysis caused by different currents and tendencies within the movement.

## **POST-2014 – STATE CAPTURE TAKES OFF**

The fifth democratic administration, particularly since December 2015, has seen the dramatic destabilisation of the pre-existing, but always unstable, post-Polokwane relative co-relation of forces within the

ANC and government. Essentially this has been the result of a more determined, more reckless, but relatively well coordinated, and well-resourced drive by a networked parasitic-patronage faction connected to the narrow BEE tendency and actively supported from the highest echelons of the ANC and state.

Since 2014 we have seen a greater boldness and recklessness from this networked tendency, associated with:

- Accelerated rent-seeking activities based on state capture;
- Increasing signs of a parallel shadow state and parallel movement;
- Creeping authoritarianism and ambitions for a more presidential system; and
- An attempt at developing a pseudo-radical, populist ideological platform to cover for these activities.

### **Accelerated rent-seeking based on state capture**

This networked parasitic patronage faction is held together by the plundering of public resources, rent-seeking activities that have focused considerably on parasitic relations with state-owned companies (SOCs) – not to privatise these entities, but to milk them and direct their billions of rands of procurement into private corporate and even individual pockets. Some of the current parasitism is directed at building war-chests to subvert the ANC's December 2017 national conference. The continued association with and defence of the Guptas, and the attempt to prolong the CPS social grant contract are, in part, an aspect of the war-chest agenda.

### **A parallel shadow state and movement**

To advance this agenda, but also to deal defensively with the growing exposure and popular outcry against it, there has been brazen abuse

of the presidential deployment prerogative into sensitive institutions – notably the South African Revenue Service (Sars) and the State Security Agency (SSA) – and particularly into institutions involved in criminal investigation and prosecution, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the Hawks. However, while these deployments have delayed or buried critical investigations and prosecutions, the calibre of those deployed and the resulting inner factional turmoil (for instance in SSA or SARS) has further deepened the crisis. With obvious presidential support, a parallel state has developed – SARS, the Hawks, the NPA are unleashed against Treasury; a rogue unit in SSA is launched as a factional arm within the ANC and ANC-led movement. Attempts to by-pass Cabinet are becoming more common – Mosebenzi Zwane’s bogus “cab memo” being the most obvious example\*. On the policy front, shadowy presidential and ministerial advisers from outside the state and even the Movement are brought in and act parallel to constitutional structures in the university crisis, on the South African Social Security Agency (Sassa) matter, on nuclear policy, etc.

### **Growing authoritarianism**

Linked to all of the above are growing inclinations to authoritarianism and presidentialism. Nostalgia for military-style, top-down command and control is openly expressed.

In July 2016 President Zuma said: “If it were up to me and I made the rules, I would ask for six months as a dictator. You would see wonders, South Africa would be straight. That’s why if you give me six months, and allow Zuma to be a dictator, you would be amazed. Absolutely. Everything would be straight. Right now to make a decision you need to consult. You need a resolution, decision, collective petition, Yoh! It’s a lot of work.”

If opposition to Mbeki at the 2007 Polokwane Conference was cen-

tred on the struggle against over-centralisation within the Presidency, we are clearly now in a much worse situation. “Imperialist conspiracies”, “regime change” threats are invoked to justify this dangerous drift – as if the accusers were not themselves involved in a “silent coup” against a democratically-elected government, and as if they were not actively betraying South Africa’s democratic national sovereignty.

Assassinations of ANC and Alliance cadres often go unsolved, and an emerging pattern of intimidation is apparent (most recently the theft at the Constitutional Court offices; and threatening behaviour at the former Social Development Director General’s private residence, etc). There is an attempt to emulate a Putin style, authoritarian, low-intensity democracy, with meetings reported between this faction and their counterparts in Russia.

However, both the sometimes amateurish calibre of state/ANC elements involved in these activities, and the broader socio-political-constitutional setting in South Africa (a stronger independent media, growing judicial confidence in holding the line, a powerful monopoly capitalist sector, and still relatively strong trade unions) often result in the early exposure of these activities, which does not make them any less sinister. What it does underline is that South African “civil society” has a much greater depth and resilience, whether from the capitalist or popular sectors, than Mugabe’s Zimbabwe or Putin’s Russia.

The growing authoritarianism at the top has its complementary counterpart at the regional and local levels. Thuggish militias, funded by provincial grandees, operate in several provinces, including the North West (where they wear T-shirts branding themselves as “Bang Fôkols”), in Mpumalanga, and KZN. They are used to break up constitutional meetings of the ANC and its Alliance partners, and may also be involved in more sinister activities. There also appears to be collusion between these forces and elements within the police, with attacks on

community leaders and activists going untouched.

### **A diversionary populist ideological platform**

In the face of growing public exposure of their misdeeds, there have been a number of ideological interventions from the parasitic-patronage faction.

On the one hand, these have involved setting up (or attempting to suborn existing) ideological apparatuses – the SABC under Hlaudi Motsoeneng; *The New Age* (whose “business model”, like most Gupta-operations, consists in funding through parasitism on SOCs, the SABC, and endless advertorials from the premier league); and the recent Bell-Pottinger operation, using social media with fake bloggers and Twitter bots, linked to pop-up “think tanks”, like Andile Mngxitama’s “Black First, Land First” and Mzwanele “Jimmy” Manyi’s “Decolonisation Foundation”.

Other institutions with a popular base among the alienated and largely apolitical have also become stop-overs. These are platforms that include evangelical sects and celebrity prophets who convey blessings upon factional personalities in deep trouble and a curse upon their “enemies” in events that are organised as “press conferences” (for example Berning Ntlemenza’s “press conference” at the Incredible Happenings Church)

Much of the ideological content from this leading faction is purely demagogic, eclectically tailored to the presumed interests of the audience. Thus the National House of Traditional Leaders was promised an improbable “pre-colonial land audit” ahead of any “radical land reform”.

Generally, the stance of the parasitic-patronage network has been a populist anti-intellectualism (“clever blacks” are disparaged). For the first time in many decades, the ANC no longer has a journal of ideologi-

cal discussion and debate.

However, over the past several months there has been an attempt to craft a more coherent ideological platform, evoking black and particularly narrow African nationalist themes and the notion of “radical economic transformation”, in the process narrowing the until recently forgotten Mangaung resolution calling for a “radical second phase of the NDR”.

This move seems in large part to have been motivated by the hugely negative impact on the parasitic-patronage network of the growing revelations of their subordination to and complicity with the Gupta family. The Gupta connection clearly has zero positive resonance either with the mass base, or even with the many local aspirant rentier factions who resent the favouritism bestowed upon (or extracted by?) the Guptas. (See Jimmy Manyi’s forced resignation from an official position within the Black Business Council because of his too-close association with the Guptas.)

Ironically, given its attempt to cast itself in radical Africanist terms, much of the content and narrative for this ideological platform appears to have been developed by the UK-based PR firm, Bell-Pottinger, working on behalf of the Guptas. Adopting the same victimhood strategy used by Zuma in 2007, the Guptas’ propaganda machinery has sought to portray the multiple revelations of wrong-doing on their part, and the belated closing of their banking accounts, as a conspiracy directed against them by “white monopoly capital” working in tandem with Treasury. Of course, since this did not square with the narrative, there was silence from these quarters when in February 2017 the Chinese Central Bank also shut down the accounts of a Gupta-related company, VR Laser Asia, involved in a dodgy deal with Denel.

Over the past several months this parasitic-patronage faction has sought to re-calibrate its public positioning somewhat. While the



Gupta family (and the networks left behind by its erstwhile Bell-Pottinger PR agency) clearly lurk in the background in many cases, there has been an attempt to downplay links in this direction and adopt a more radical sounding, Africanist posture. However, “radical”, in these quarters, is largely rhetorical and is almost entirely focused on advancing narrow black elite accumulation. This very narrow version of BEE evokes “blacks in general, and Africans in particular”, but in effect, it’s about “**me** and **mine** specifically”. The reduction of “radical economic transformation” almost entirely to a question of private black corporate “ownership, control and management of the economy” side-lines any notion of **social ownership**, or of **popular** control, or of **worker** management.

We are told that companies directly controlled by black people only own 10% of the JSE, but what is left unexplained is: even if individual black people owned 80% of the JSE, how would that impact on the triple (and racialised) crises of unemployment, poverty and inequality? The same applies to the constant references to “**white** monopoly capital” – if it became black monopoly capital would that change the lives of the majority of South Africans? The fudging of class is carried through in the way in which correct statistics are presented but abbreviated – for instance, we are told “white households earn five times more than black households”. Shamefully, that’s true, but notice what is missing – the word “average”. The StatsSA finding from which this is drawn says: “The **average** white household earns five times more than the **average** black household”. That reality is, of course, absolutely scandalous and is the source of social instability. But when you omit the word “average”, you omit class and wilfully omit the growing class divisions and diverging class interests within the ANC itself. The top 10% of earners in South Africa earn as much as the remaining 90%, but half of that 10% is now black.

The major ideological counter-offensive that the parasitic-patronage network has attempted to deploy, thus far, has been the fig-leaf of a narrow Africanist, “black first, land first” variety. However, more recently, there have also been attempts to advance a more Marxist-flavoured narrative as an alibi for parasitic plundering.

One voice in this latter regard is Chris Malikane, an academic and recently appointed adviser to the new Minister of Finance. Malikane characterises the current key dynamic within the ANC and state as a clash between different fractions (he calls them different “classes”) of the bourgeoisie. “On the one side is white monopoly capital and credit-based black capitalists... who have amassed wealth through black economic empowerment. Opposing them are black capitalists, who have taken advantage of state tenders.” Although the analysis needs considerable nuancing, there is some truth in this characterisation – the SACP has referred to the two (sometimes competing, but often overlapping) emerging black fractions of the bourgeoisie as a “comprador” bourgeoisie (Malikane’s credit-based bourgeoisie), largely dependent upon and subordinate to established domestic and global monopoly capital, on the one hand, and a parasitic bourgeoisie milking public resources, on the other.

Malikane’s principal error is that, in advocating “radical economic transformation”, he takes sides with the one faction: “In so far as the tender-based capitalist class has begun its war against the dominant white monopoly capitalist class, it has to be encouraged”. The problem with this pseudo-Marxist analysis is that the very basis for the existence of these “tender-based capitalists” is their massive attack upon and consequent erosion of the two key potential working class and popular struggle weapons critical to the transformation of a political economy dominated by monopoly capital – the post-1994 democratic state and particularly its SOCs, and an ANC national liberation move-

ment still (but for how long?) enjoying majority electoral support.

Of course the SACP does and should support using state procurement and targeted tendering to ensure re-industrialisation through localisation, beneficiation, de-concentration, and the promotion of productive black industrialists, etc. These are important pillars of any second radical phase. But the current Gupta-type dominant fractions of “tender-based capitalists” are not productive industrialists; they are a parasitic-patronage network supported from the highest echelons of the state and ANC. Key levers of radical transformation – Eskom, Transnet, Prasa, SAA, Sassa and even critical ideological/cultural institutions (the SABC) – have been massively weakened through parasitic robbery. And the post-Polokwane entry-point into these critical strategic sites of power has been through control over the ANC by way of wholesale patronage networks that buy membership and rig internal ANC elections, which is actively leading to the demise of the ANC’s popular support.

It is important that the imperative of a radical second phase of the NDR is rescued from the demagogic clutches of the parasitic-patronage network. The SACP has a critical role to play in this regard. What follows is a shortened and updated version of the SACP’s discussion document, *Going to the Root*.

## **A SECOND RADICAL PHASE OF THE NDR – GOING TO THE ROOT**

Despite major redistributive efforts on many fronts since the 1994 democratic breakthrough (including 4-million subsidised “RDP” houses; 17-million social grants; 7-million household electricity connections, etc.) crisis levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality persist. These crises are strongly marked by racial, gendered, and geographical factors – the poorest of the poor remain African rural women.

Why the persistence of these crises? Is it because of poor govern-

ment “delivery”? There are certainly many weaknesses in government capacity, and there is a need for significant improvement. But in relative international terms we have carried out a major redistributive programme. Is it because of weak growth? If we “grow the cake” then can we do better? But even during the previous decade of sustained growth in the post-apartheid period, the triple crisis persisted.

Clearly the problems are structural, they are embedded within the systemic features of our political economy. Growth along the same trajectory simply reproduces all of the deep-seated problems. This is why any solution has to be “radical” – that is to say, we have to go to the root of the problem. There has to be a **structural** transformation.

So what are the origins of this problematic, deeply-rooted structural legacy?

The problematic, systemic features of our political economy are rooted in South Africa’s colonial and white minority-rule history

The capitalist industrial revolution in South Africa in the late 1800s did not emerge “organically” from within South Africa, but was built around the mining revolution, which combined:

- A high **dependency** on (and subordination to) foreign finance capital and technology, primarily because quite quickly the capitalist exploitation of both the diamond fields and the gold reefs required deep-level extraction; and
- A massive **reserve army** of “cheap labour” – drawn from “native reserves”, and, indeed from throughout southern Africa.

Although much has changed in South Africa since the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these core features of the capitalist industrial revolution in our country have produced (and re-produce) systemic features, what is sometimes called a “path dependency”, which still persist today:

- Extremely high levels of private **monopoly capital** domination,

especially in the mining, banking and energy complex – and, therefore, a relatively weak manufacturing and SMME sector;

- The semi-peripheral subordination of South Africa within the global capitalist value chain – despite its very early industrialisation, South Africa has been locked into a growth trajectory as an exporter of low-value, un-beneficiated natural resources and as an importer of technology and capital goods;

- **Spatial inequalities** – Not only was the political formation that emerged in 1910 as the Union of South Africa a semi-peripheral political economy serving a distant imperialist core, but the massive reserve army of labour was sourced from and reproduced in local (and regional) rural peripheries – principally the “native reserves”, later bantustans. This “internal colonial” relationship played out between peripheral labour reserves and industrial mining and port centres. With the advance of the 20th century, it was also (and increasingly) reproduced in the core/periphery relationship of urban African townships on the distant outskirts of South African towns and cities.

- **Patriarchal oppression** – patriarchal values and oppression are found in most societies, but these were acutely intensified for the majority of women in South Africa by the “indirect rule” system through which the mining houses and successive colonial and white minority regimes exerted control over labour reserves. This was done through the simultaneous conservation and perversion of a “traditional” patriarchal subordinate apparatus – kings, chiefs and headmen, appointed by colonial and white minority rule authorities. Pre-capitalist societies in South Africa had both regressive patriarchal and progressive communal, democratic features. The latter we still honour today, partly in words (izimbizo/makgotla; ubuntu; masakhane; communal land, etc.), but also in the many every-day

practices of social solidarity and cooperation in working class communities (like stokvels). Successive colonial and white minority administrations preserved the worst authoritarian features and entrenched these in a system of indirect rule which later morphed into bantustan authorities. Today, one-third of South Africans, mostly women, still live as quasi-citizen-subjects under one or another form of chiefly authority. It was through this indirect rule system that girls, young men acting as “herd-boys”, and especially women were forced into bearing the brunt of the reproduction of “cheap” (for the mining houses) migrant male labour – through child-rearing, care for the sick and injured, and the elderly, while scratching the barest of livelihoods from survivalist farming. On the mines themselves, the mining houses also reinforced labour discipline through an ethnic “boss-boy” system.

The lumpen patriarchy that is so much in evidence in contemporary South Africa, the extraordinarily high-levels of violence against women and children, male-based gangs, shack-lords, quasi-trade union formations like the Five Madoda, and, perhaps, we should now add the political militias and goon squads like the North West province’s “Bang Fokols”, all have multiple origins. But the de-humanising impact of decades of colonially-distorted “traditional” patriarchy should not be underestimated. Nor should we forget that around one-third of South African citizens are also “subjects” of patriarchal authority in the former reserves. The majority of those affected are women.

- **A segmented labour force** – although the institutionalised segmentation of the labour force, with racially defined job reservation, labour preference areas and the like, has been abolished, the working class still remains stratified along racial lines. Artisanal and skilled positions are still disproportionately occupied by whites, and low skilled work almost entirely performed by blacks. A massive re-

serve army of labour has long been the core feature of South Africa's capitalist economy and of its relationship to the rest of the southern African region. High levels of unemployment have been disguised in rural dumping grounds and in township "informality", giving rise to migrancy by annual, seasonal and daily, contract labour, and the inhumane treatment and casual discarding of workers. These largely racialised patterns continue with 6,9-million workers unemployed and many more in precarious work. In addition, economic crises and urban and rural poverty in our wider southern African region have effectively transformed countries like Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Lesotho into labour-exporting reserves ("bantustans") for post-apartheid South African capitalism by way of a huge flow of economic refugees.

- **Education and training** – the reproduction of both class and racial inequalities was deliberately perpetuated through decades of colonial and apartheid education and training policies and practices. In the pre-1948 (pre-apartheid) period, the reproduction of class and race inequalities in the education system was largely by way of neglect of the African majority. However, in response to growing capitalist labour market needs for a semi-skilled labour force, the apartheid regime introduced the Bantu Education system. While the inferior character of this education system is often and correctly criticised, the scale of the roll-out is sometimes forgotten. When the National Party took power in 1948, the average black child spent only four years in school, and only a quarter of black children of school-going age were enrolled as pupils. Under the Bantu Education system the number of places for black pupils increased rapidly. But the racial inequalities in terms of government spending were massive, and with the growing intake of black pupils the per capita inequality increased. In 1953 government spending per African pupil was 14%

of that for each white pupil, by 1968 it had declined to 6%.

This significant expansion of education for blacks was not, of course, due to any enlightened philanthropy on the part of the apartheid regime. It was a strategic response to the growing demand for more literate, more numerate semi-skilled labour, while professional training and qualifications in the expanding but limited black universities (“bush colleges”) was intended to be reserved for staffing “homeland” administrations in the bantustans.

Since 1994, at a formal institutional level we have had a single, non-racial public education system, while important progress has been made in terms of achieving near universal school enrolment. However, in practice, vast inequalities persist throughout the education system, and serve to reproduce race and class inequalities.

- **Unsustainable environmental destruction** – Pre-colonial African societies lived in relative harmony with their natural environment. Everywhere, capitalism’s voracious need for ever-expanding growth has resulted in the destruction of the metabolic relation between societies and nature. Colonialism in the era of capitalism was particularly destructive of both human lives and wider nature as it embarked on an often genocidal process of primary accumulation. In South Africa, colonially-orchestrated, capitalist-driven industrialisation was based on an especially ruinous path – mineral extraction that has plundered our non-renewable national wealth at huge cost to human health, and to the environment, of which the current acid mine drainage crisis is but one symptom. Formerly cheap and abundant coal resources have also locked our energy system and wider productive economy into an excessively carbon-intensive path.

All of these systemically-interlinked legacy features of our political economy point to key radical structural transformation features that need to be the critical pillars of a second radical phase of the NDR.



They also point to why the National Question and therefore an NDR strategy remain central features of our struggle, not least our struggle for a socialist South Africa.

## **KEY PILLARS OF A SECOND RADICAL PHASE OF THE NDR**

Many of the sectoral policies that are elaborated below are familiar. Many, although not all, are found in both existing government and ANC policy programmes. It is pointless for the SACP to invent wholly new policies for the sake of appearances. However there are several important emphases:

- Many sound programmes are poorly implemented, or are under-resourced, or are ineffectively integrated with other policy programmes;
- Even more seriously, the now run-away state capture train is deliberately implicated in creating policy incoherence, as narrow personal agendas are pursued, and clientelistic transactional trade-offs are made to oil the wheels of patronage regardless of the overall impact; and
- Above all, our policy programmes must, individually, and collectively, have a strategically transformative character – getting to the root of the underlying structural distortions of our society that were noted above. Often, government policies lack a clear transformative agenda.

**Defence, consolidation and expansion of democratic social ownership and control of our country's major resources and enterprises.**

In the present context of the massive state-capture onslaught on our state owned enterprise sector – the defence and consolidation of our SOCs sector is an immediate priority. There is already a relatively extensive state-owned sector in our country including: all of South Africa's

ports and the great majority of our rail system are owned and controlled by Transnet and its subsidiaries; the majority of electricity in South Africa is generated and all of it is transmitted by Eskom; our major airports are owned and controlled by Acsa (now once more 100% publicly owned); the majority of our air-fleet is owned and operated by public entities – most notably SAA; with the passing of the Mineral Resources and Petroleum Development Act, all mineral resources were placed under public ownership with trusteeship vested in the state; the broadcast spectrum is controlled and regulated by the state; the Department of Public Works' Property Management Trading Entity has a property portfolio some seven times larger than the next largest property portfolio (that belonging to the JSE-listed Growthpoint); the largest investment fund in South Africa is the publicly controlled Public Investment Corporation with over R1 857-trillion assets under management. There are major publicly controlled financial institutions (DFIs) – among them IDC, the Land Bank, the DBSA, and several provincial DFIs, including Ithala Bank in KZN.

As noted above, however, this relative massive publicly-owned asset base, has not been used with sufficient strategic discipline and coordination to drive a second radical phase of the NDR. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the “1996 class project” drove a corporatisation agenda, much of which was intended to prepare key SOCs for privatisation. The corporatisation process gutted much of the historical developmental capacity of leading SOCs. For instance, Eskom and Transnet (formerly Spoornet) were critical training grounds for (white) artisanal training across the economy. This vital capacity, now needed to ensuring the training of all South Africans, has disappeared. There was some partial privatisation (notably SAA, Acsa and Telkom), partly as another form of primitive capital accumulation for a narrow BEE elite.

In the more recent “state capture” period, most of the major SOCs,

DFIs and publicly-controlled investment funds have been subjected to aggressive, parasitic raiding in the name of “radical economic transformation”.

Which is why the first task is the democratic **defence** of the public sector, strategic SOCs, DFIs and public investment funds.

The second task is to ensure that this vast asset base is used with **strategic discipline** to leverage a second radical phase of the NDR, with the key focus on inclusive growth, job creation, and developmental impact.

A third task is to utilise the state’s regulatory powers to expand **social** ownership and control. For instance, instead of using the state’s custodianship of South Africa’s mineral wealth beneath our soil to leverage “free carry” share ownership for private black-owned companies (as is being proposed), a percentage of mine-shares must be provided as “free carry” to a national Sovereign Wealth Fund, and a further percentage to be allocated to mine-workers – thus fulfilling the Freedom Charter perspective that “the mineral wealth of South Africa belongs to **all who live in it**”.

**(Re-)Industrialisation** – Some important progress has been made since 2009 with the introduction of the state-led Industrial Policy Action Plans (Ipaps), in particular in the auto and auto-components and in the very challenging clothing and textile sectors. However, if our industrialisation programmes are to have the intended radical, structurally transformative impact, they require significantly higher levels of resourcing. Greater attention needs to be paid to labour intensive sectors, hence the latest emphasis on agro-processing. Apart from the key task of employment creation within a decent work agenda, our Ipap interventions need to be clearly positioned within a **national** democratic strategy to overcome South Africa’s sovereign vulnerability to external imperialist realities, as a result of our historical semi-peripheral loca-

tion within the global economy. Directly related to this is:

**The relative de-linking from dependency upon global imperialist value-chains** – through localisation, beneficiation, funding South African research and development; tougher financial flow controls; and a greater emphasis on southern African and sub-Saharan integrated and balanced development.

**Spatial transformation (transforming apartheid-colonial space)** – through state-led economic and social infrastructural development; integrated urbanisation; township economies; public transport; and strategic land reform. Again this range of interventions needs to be positioned within a **national** democratic strategic perspective. The structural reproduction of racial inequality and class exploitation is directly related to the perpetuation of apartheid-colonial space – now driven largely by the capitalist land and housing markets. Directly related to spatial transformation is the struggle to:

**Effect a relative de-linking of working class communities from excessive dependency upon the capitalist market (including the capitalist labour market)** – through land reform, sustainable livelihoods, cooperative and social entrepreneurship development, the township economy emphasising the production of use-values for working class communities, public employment programmes, the expansion of social protection measures, progressive moves towards a public work-guarantee scheme (the right to work), imposition of prescribed asset requirements on the financial sector.

When we speak of a **National Democratic Revolution** it is important not to forget the second word – **democratic**. (This is one of the reasons why the SACP continues to insist on using the full Mangaung resolution that called for a “second radical phase of the NDR”, rather than the truncated version that has now become popular – “radical economic transformation”).

In the first place, the question has increasingly arisen as to whether the 100% proportional representation (PR) system in national and provincial elections is still appropriate to achieving effective constituency representation, and whether the PR system in strengthening centralised party leadership control over public representatives, has not been a factor in the state capture crisis.

More importantly, we will not succeed in driving effective structural transformation of our society without mobilised and organised popular power. The first radical phase of the NDR abolished the institutions of white minority rule and introduced a non-racial, one-person one-vote parliamentary democracy. This was an important advance – but the “democratic” in the NDR refers to a much deeper set of practices of which representative electoral democracy (in whatever form it is organised) is just one part. The Freedom Charter speaks also of organs of direct democracy. In the course of the popular uprisings of the 1980s rudimentary organs of local popular power emerged – self-defence committees, street committees, people’s courts and so on..

After 1994 a range of institutions were legislated for and were intended to take forward this rich experience – community policing forums, school governing bodies, ward committees, and the principle of popular participation in municipal budgeting and integrated development planning. In practice few of these structures have advanced popular participatory democracy – having been captured by the state bureaucracy, or politicians, or middle strata for their own purposes. Why has this happened? How do we revitalise these potentially critical organs of popular power?

Contributing to these challenges has been a loss of the popular movement character of the ANC and the Alliance partners. Much of the organisational structure of the ANC and its leagues has been converted into an electoral machine at best and, at worst, little more than para-

sitic-patronage networks. The SACP has also lost much of its popular mobilisational momentum over the last five or six years, and Cosatu, on the back foot in the face of mass retrenchments, has often been consumed with internal battles.

Given these realities, the Alliance has often found itself tailing behind, or even divided, in the face of popular struggles – the student struggles of the past two years being one example, the numerous local “delivery” protests being another.

But a second radical phase of the NDR will not be possible without the effective, strategic unity of a democratic developmental state and effectively organised and mobilised popular and working class power.

Defence of the NDR is also centrally about re-building a democratic criminal justice system and intelligence services aligned to our democratic constitutional values

The parasitic-patronage state capture agenda strategically targeted the criminal justice system and then the state-owned enterprises. Working class communities, in particular, live in a state of insecurity, while much of the South African Police Service are poorly trained, demoralised and under-resourced. The upper echelons of strategic institutions, particularly the Hawks and the NPA have been captured by factional parasitic forces, while a dominant but rogue unit within the Intelligence Services has become the key node of the shadow state. The removal of corrupt elements in these institutions and ensuring that the criminal justice system returns to constitutionality and service to the people, is now a key priority of defending, deepening and advancing a second radical phase of the NDR.

## **SOCIALISM IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the SACP played a relatively important international role in keeping the red flag of socialism flying. It was

an internationalist responsibility that the SACP at the time well understood. With the Soviet bloc of countries rapidly unravelling, with once mass-based communist parties in countries like Italy and France losing momentum, and with the historic communist party and trade union left in much of Latin America still reeling from decades of imperialist and military junta oppression, the ANC-led breakthrough in South Africa was one of the few radical popular developments of the time.

The SACP was very much an integral part of this radical breakthrough, a fact that was evident both among popular forces at home and internationally. The SACP appreciated that this imposed an internationalist duty on the SACP to, as it were, keep the red flag (and our very name as a communist party) flying. This meant neither being demoralised nor being in denial about the reasons for the major set-back that the collapse of the Soviet Union represented. As a Party that had from its outset been inspired by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, and that had been closely associated with the Soviet legacy for many decades, we had a particular responsibility both to our own broader movement and to left forces internationally.

In the early 1990s two important interventions were made from the side of the SACP. Our General Secretary at the time, cde Joe Slovo, published *Has socialism failed?* in 1990, and in 1995 the SACP at its Congress formally adopted a new strategic approach to the struggle for socialism – encapsulated in the slogan “*Socialism is the future – build it now!*”.

Slovo’s intervention was translated into a number of international languages, receiving a wide local and international left-wing readership. He acknowledged the important advances made after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in terms of full employment, health care, housing and major industrialisation in a formerly backward country. He also saluted the selfless assistance rendered by the Soviet Union and its al-

lies to the South African liberation struggle.

Slovo further noted the unceasing anti-Soviet imperialist offensive that had continued unabated from foreign invasions in support of the White Army counter-revolution in the Civil War, through the Nazi invasion in 1941 which resulted in 20-million deaths of Soviet citizens and the destruction of a large percentage of its productive base, through to the Cold War, with the threat of nuclear annihilation compelling a costly arms race burden.

These and multiple other imperialist-driven offensive operations, Slovo argued, contributed to a siege mentality within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), which reinforced other internal weaknesses and deviations, some of which assumed horrific dimensions – notably the mass-scale purges under Stalin, which eliminated millions of people, including much of the cream of the 1917 working class revolutionary leadership. These criminal excesses were halted in the 1950s and roundly criticised as a “Stalinist cult of the personality” at the CPSU’s 20th Congress in 1956.

However, as Slovo went on to argue, the rectification of the Stalinist errors did not overcome increasing economic and bureaucratic stagnation, which eventually led to the peaceful overthrow of the system from the late 1980s by the working class itself.

The thrust of Slovo’s intervention was that it was not socialism that had failed, but rather a socialist project that suffered from a deficit of democracy. He argued that capitalism can survive with or without formal democracy, relying on the threatening whip of unemployment and the bait of consumerism to drive people into alienated and exploited work. However, in the Soviet Union an extensive social wage but without vibrant democracy, including democracy in the work-place itself, resulted in social stagnation and mass alienation. Slovo’s conclusion was that without a vibrant popular and working class democracy, so-



cialism could not thrive.

In further SACP discussions, and particularly in the light of immediate challenges the Party was facing in the post-1994 period, Slovo's critique of 20th-century "existing socialism" was taken forward. A strong "economistic" tendency in the Soviet system was identified, involving a forced march into industrialisation, and an over-emphasis on developing and "modernising" the forces of production to the detriment of thoroughly democratising the relations of production. This resulted in further problems, the harsh treatment of other popular classes, notably the peasantry, and the attempt to "catch up" with the West at any cost, with a neglect of the devastation to the environment.

Socialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will need to place a premium on ensuring food security for its people, on sustainable livelihoods, sustainable households and communities, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The SACP's 9th Congress (1995) and 10th Congress (1998) built upon and took further Slovo's perspectives on socialism. In particular, these congresses decisively broke with the "stage-ist" conception of the relationship between a radical NDR and the construction of socialism. This break with "stage-ism" was particularly important at a time when the Mbeki-period "1996 class project", sought to strategically re-define the NDR as essentially about "completing" the capitalist revolution in South Africa, which meant "de-racialising" capitalist ownership and control – but not increasingly abolishing capitalist ownership. The "1996 class project", used "stage-ism" to argue that, yes, they had no problem with socialism (and therefore with the SACP), but socialism and the SACP belonged to a distant future.

While continuing to assert that in South African conditions a radical NDR is the most direct "route" to socialism, with the slogan Socialism is the future – build it now, the Party committed to injecting a socialist-

orientation into present-day struggle. The argument was that defending, advancing and deepening the NDR requires building capacity for socialism (including, therefore, a class conscious working class), momentum towards socialism (through pursuing anti-capitalist struggles in the midst of the NDR), and even building elements of socialism in the present. Among the elements of socialism to be built in the midst of the NDR, are:

- The increasing de-commodification of basic needs – health-care, education, housing, the environment, culture and information, and work itself. In other words, taking basic needs out of the sphere of the market;
- Transforming the market – the decommodification of key areas of our society does not mean abolishing the market altogether, but rather the rolling back of its empire. To transform markets means intervening with collective social power to challenge and transform the capitalist dominated market-place using active labour market interventions; state procurement leverage; regulatory controls; and effective consumer negotiating forums;
- Socialising the ownership function – by building a strong, democratic public sector; fostering an extensive co-operative and social-solidarity economy sector; ensuring much more effective strategic worker control over social capital (like pension and provident funds);
- Socialising the management function – in the public sector by struggling against bureaucratic aloofness and ensuring greater levels of public participatory engagement; and, in the private sector, ensuring that the management function is not one-sidedly dominated by profit-maximising objectives – by using effective work-place forums, safety committees, etc; and

**Democratic planning – both at the central level and in devolved locations where appropriate.**

None of these measures in themselves, or in isolation, amount to socialism. All of them are open to being co-opted into the capitalist system. This is why on our terrain of revolutionary-reforms, in the context of contesting all sites of power, the question of momentum and transformative coordination are critical. We must seek constantly to build working class and popular confidence and power. We must seek constantly to advance transformational interventions that place our principal strategic opponent, monopoly capital, off-balance. In short, we must build working class and popular hegemony in all sites of power.

This requires both a vanguard party of socialism and a broad national democratic movement. Which is why we say:

*Communists to the front!*

*to defend, deepen and advance – the National Democratic Revolution! ●*

\*In September 2016 Mineral Resources Minister Mosebenzi Zwane announced that Cabinet had agreed to request a judicial commission into South Africa's major banks and their closure of the accounts of Oakbay Investments, a company controlled by the Gupta family. The Presidency confirmed the next day that Cabinet had in fact taken no such decision. No action was taken against Zwane, who remains Mineral Resources Minister.